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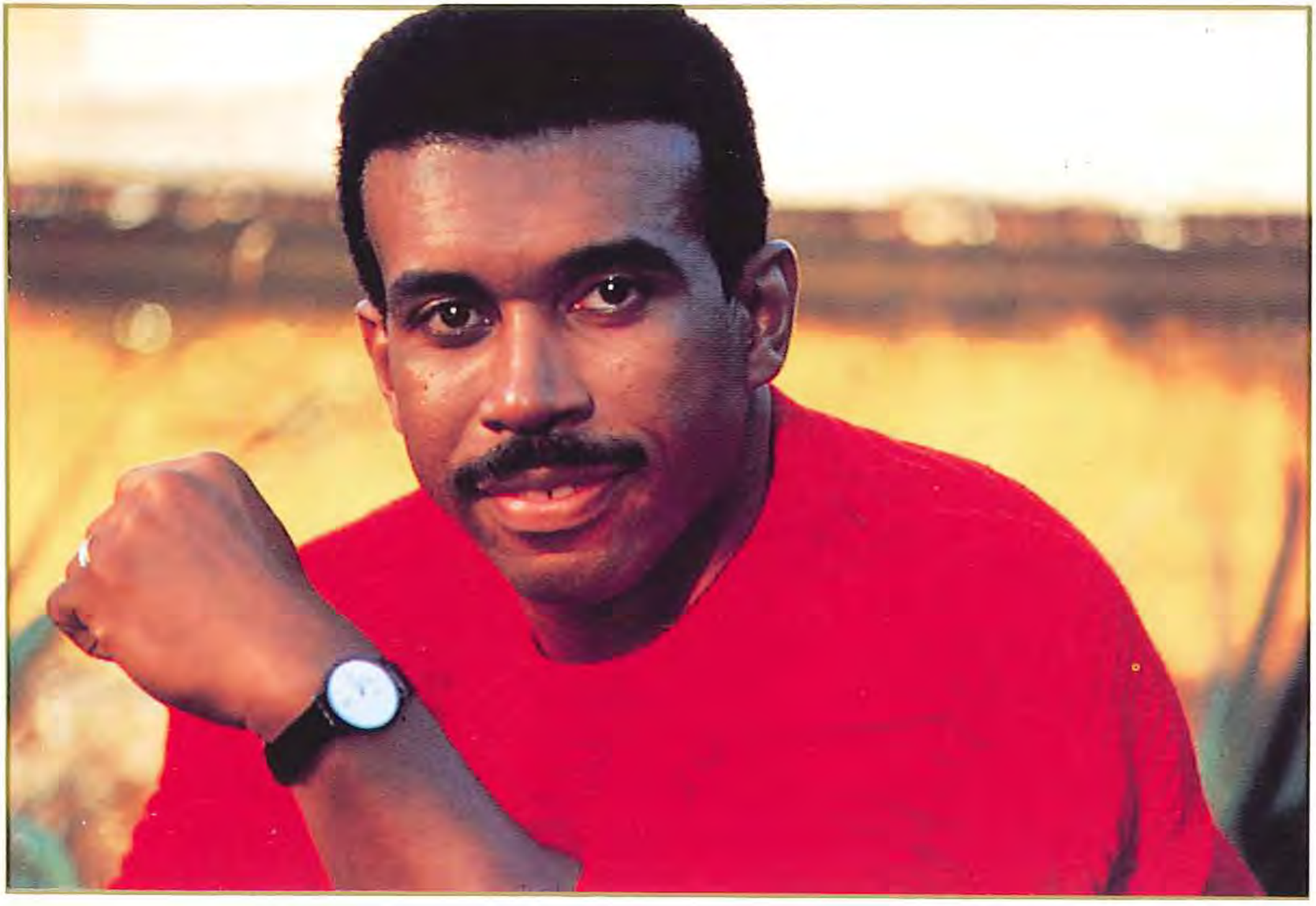
GERSHWIN

3 Preludes • 6 Songs

COREA

20 Children's Songs

Leon Bates, Piano



1989 Recording | Playing Time: 63'09"

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

3 Preludes

6 Songs

Chick Corea (1941-)

20 Children's Songs

America has had an interesting artistic development owing to its blending of cultures from various parts of the world. It seems only fitting that the musicians who grow up in this diversity should write music that reflects it. However strong the diversity, the basic elements of jazz (American Classical Music) and European Classical Music have followed different tracks even as they have developed. The musicians who have grown up in one area have seldom entered the other.

George Gershwin and Chick Corea represent two different periods in American musical creativity but both have been involved as creators of music one might call Fusion, in the case of Gershwin a blend of Jazz and Classical ideas and with Corea the entwining of Jazz, Rock, and classical elements. The piano has been the creative voice for both men and composition an extension of the pianistic gift.

There is a similarity between the preludes of Gershwin and the Children's Songs of Corea in that they both write in short simple statements. While their styles of harmonization are different, that seems to be a reflection of their respective time periods, Gershwin living from 1898 to 1937 and Chick Corea being born in 1941 and continuing to create at this moment.

It is very fitting that these two composers are sharing this recording since the one, Gershwin, helped to establish many of the musical ideas by which the other, Corea, has undoubtedly been influenced. Together their contributions

cover an entire century. Doubtless what they have contributed will be considered in the future in the realm of serious art music.

The Preludes of Gershwin are indicative of this composer's interest in writing in Classical forms. The two outer pieces are highly rhythmic and charged with great energy while the middle selection is an evocative Blues piece. The playing of these works requires an appreciation of the lyricism of the Blues, a standard American form of expression, and the highly rhythmic music popular in the urban areas of America in the early twentieth century.

The Songs of Gershwin are well-known examples of American creative genius. They have been used over the years in many different arrangements. It was an interesting challenge to write my own arrangements though. I did not want to lose the flavour of the original melodies but at the same time I wanted to make a statement that would allow me to realize my own pianistic ends.

The idea for the arrangements came up as a result of my interest in performing Gershwin's settings of his songs. The composer's versions, however, were quite brief and did not allow me room to show my own piano skills. Fascinatin' Rhythm, Somebody Loves Me, Liza, and I've Got Rhythm all make use of Gershwin's original ideas to establish their respective characters. My own written improvisations are then woven into the existing fabric. The remaining two songs, The Man I Love and Strike Up The Band are completely original arrangements. The total statement is exciting for me in that it represents my contribution to a legacy; the continuum of musically creative people for ever influenced by their predecessors.

The Songs accomplish what I aimed for, as countless performances will attest. The pieces are certainly technically challenging, thereby giving one a substantial amount of music to interpret. I have used broken octaves, rapidly moving chords, ascending and descending chromatic thirds, grace notes, flattened thirds and sixths over a stride bass as part of my vocabulary. I have filled them with what I think are interesting challenges that lie well in the hand

but certainly take practice to maintain sharpness. At the same time these ideas do not get in the way of what Gershwin wrote. At least I do not think so. In any case you can be the judge. In an era which thrives on Pop culture, it is refreshing to encounter the music of a composer-pianist who is both a stepping-stone to the music of the future and a link to the past.

Chick Corea is a serious creative force who is current with his time in that he employs the resources of his time to be expressive. His continued involvement in the development of Jazz Fusion since its inception in the 1960's has given him the chance to use electronic instrumentation as a means of creating. His performance group, Return to Forever of the 1970's helped chart a course in electric Jazz. Chick Corea's name has become synonymous with new ideas in music. He is currently involved in the continued evolution of electronic music as he performs with the Elektric Band, a modern representative of the Jazz Fusion evolution. In addition he has been a steady performer in the traditional jazz settings, having become legendary for his skills as a performer on acoustic piano. At present he is making a strong statement with a group called the Akoustic Band.

Chick Corea has also used his pianistic skills in collaboration with other well-known keyboardists such as Keith Jarrett, Friedrich Gulda, and Herbie Hancock. His busy schedule as a performer in his own compositions as well as the works of others links him to the exploits of Franz Liszt and Ludwig van Beethoven. As a composer Corea has proved his diversity by his ability to write in Classical forms as well as modern ones, as demonstrated by his Septet that was written for the chamber group Tashi, and his piano concerto.

The Children's Songs were Corea's first attempt at writing for solo piano. These pieces were begun in 1971 and were added to gradually over the next nine years, culminating in the twenty pieces represented here. Chick says he wrote the first song "to convey simplicity as beauty, as represented in the spirit of a child." The first fifteen songs were written for the Fender Rhodes, one of the earliest electric keyboards, and sixteen up to twenty for the acoustic piano.

However all of the songs can be played either way. The Songs are reminders of the Scenes from Chidhood of Robert Schumann and the Children's Pieces of Mussorgsky in that they are short, to the point and are quite contrasting in their natures. The Corea songs are characterized by infectious ostinato bass-lines, syncopated rhythms and circular melodies that are very charming in their innocence. The Children's Songs are fun to play because while being simple and direct in their statements they are sometimes quite probing and colourful in their nuances, not unlike children themselves.

Leon Bates

Born in Philadelphia Leon Bates took his first music lessons in piano and violin at the age of six. He studied under the late Irene Beck at the Settlement Music School and under Natalie Hinderas at Temple University. In his career he has won many awards and prizes and has performed with several of the leading world orchestras such as the Cleveland Orchestra and the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. His previous recordings for Orion records have met with critical acclaim.

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STEREO

GERSHWIN
3 Preludes • 6 Songs
COREA
20 Children's Songs
Leon Bates, Piano

DDD

Playing Time : 63'09"

	GERSHWIN: 3 Preludes	
1	Allegro ben ritmato e deciso	(1:23)
2	Andante con moto e poco rubato	(4:08)
3	Allegro ben ritmato e deciso	(1:09)
	GERSHWIN: 6 Songs	
4	Fascinatin' Rhythm	(3:40)
5	Somebody Loves Me	(4:03)
6	Lisa	(3:59)
7	The Man I Love	(3:21)
8	I've Got Rhythm	(3:21)
9	Strike Up the Band	(2:53)
	COREA: Children's Songs	
10	I	(1:47)
11	II	(0:51)
12	III	(1:15)
13	IV	(2:12)
14	V	(1:09)
15	VI	(2:10)
16	VII	(1:39)
17	VIII	(1:31)
18	IX	(1:07)
19	X	(1:22)
20	XI	(0:35)
21	XII	(2:30)
22	XIII	(1:35)
23	XIV	(1:44)
24	XV	(1:08)
25	XVI	(0:57)
26	XVII	(1:24)
27	XVIII	(1:30)
28	XIX	(2:48)
29	XX	(1:18)

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Hubert Geschwandtner
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